



Formatting Equations in Word

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I want to include an equation in a Microsoft Word 2002 document, but I don't know how to make it look right. The equation is $F=GM_1M_2/\Gamma^2$, where the numbers after the Ms are subscripts and Γ^2 represents the distance squared. I can find the distance symbol, but I don't know how to shrink and then raise or lower the numbers.

I found the Eq field name in the Categories drop-down list of the Insert | Field dialog, but when I click on Equation Editor, I'm told that the feature is not installed. Because I'm not the administrator of my system, I can't install the Equation Editor.

Janet King

You can easily take the equation as shown and modify the formatting of the numbers to get what you want. First highlight the 1 and choose Font from the Format menu. Check Subscript and click OK. Repeat this step for the first 2; for the second 2, check Superscript instead. The result looks like this:

$$F=GM_1M_2/\Gamma^2$$

But you can get a much more attractive result using the Equation Editor (see Figure 1). When you click the Equation Editor button in the Field dialog, some Word 2002 installations erroneously report that the feature is not installed. To get around this, select Object from the Insert menu, choose Microsoft Equation 3.0, and click on OK. This should bring up the Equation Editor.

To start, type F= in the editor. Now click on the Fraction and radical templates button in the floating Equation toolbar. Keep an eye on the status bar as you move the mouse for a text explanation of each button. In this case, you want the Full-size vertical fraction template.

Click on the top portion of the fraction and type GM. Then click the Subscript and superscript templates button and click on Subscript. Type the 1, then right-arrow to get out of the subscript template. Type the second M and add its subscript 2.

Click on the bottom part of the equation, click the Greek characters (uppercase) button, and choose gamma (G). Then assign it a superscript 2 in the same way you created the subscripts.

Keyboard shortcuts can make the process a lot easier, though you'll have to do some digging to find the ones you need. Here's how you can create our equation in the Equation Editor using shortcut keys.

1. Type F=, then press Ctrl-F (for fraction).
2. Type GM, press Ctrl-L (for a subscript), then type 1.
3. Press the Right Arrow to move out of subscript mode and type M. Press Ctrl-L and type 2.
4. Hit the Tab key twice to move to the denominator.
5. Press Ctrl-G for Greek characters and then Shift-G for the gamma.

6. Press Ctrl-H (for a superscript), type 2, and you're done.

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